

REMARKS

The final Office Action dated July 16, 2003 has been received and carefully considered. The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action.

Claim 1 has been further amended to incorporate the features of claims 5 and 7, respectively. Since the amendments merely involve the incorporation of dependent features that have been previously considered, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments do not introduce new matter, and do not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search. Thus, entry and consideration of the amended claims is proper and is respectfully requested.

More specifically, as now amended, claim 1 recites that the feed screw mechanism comprises a feed screw nut, wherein the feed screw nut is a ball screw nut having a cylindrical section having a penetrating screw hole, and a pair of flange sections which are formed integrally at one end of the cylindrical section and which are fixed to a side surface portion of the slider. Moreover, as was already defined in original claim 1, the feed screw nut is received in an opening ("a slider having an opening for receiving said feed screw shaft and said feed screw nut therein"), and in particular, as now amended, claim 1 clarifies that the opening extends in the axial direction and defines a U-shaped inner surface of the slider.

Thus, as now set forth in amended claim 1, the feed screw nut of the feed screw mechanism is received and accommodated within an opening, which comprises a U-shaped inner surface of the slider. It is respectfully submitted that such features are not disclosed or suggested in either of the references cited and relied upon in the final Office Action.

Turning first to Yamada (U.S. Patent No. 6,240,796), only claims 1 to 6 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on the cited reference. Thus, the Examiner appears to recognize that Yamada does not disclose or suggest a U-shaped opening into which a feed screw nut is accommodated. Further, Yamada possesses the same disadvantages of the background prior art discussed in the present specification, since with the structure of Yamada it is impossible to provide the feed screw shaft mechanism as a single removable unit. On the contrary, when the screw shaft mechanism is assembled, it is necessary to insert the screw shaft (4) through the through-hole (16) of the slider (3). Further, in order to remove the screw shaft (4), it is necessary to pull out the screw shaft from an axial end of the track rail (2) to disengage the screw shaft (4) from the through-hole (16). In such a procedure, it is difficult and time consuming to pull out the screw shaft (4) from the through-hole (16). See, present specification, page 2, lines 3-19.

Claims 1-4 and 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nagai et al. (EP 0 987 468).

Nagai et al., however, also fails to disclose or suggest a mechanism in which the feed screw nut is accommodated in a U-

shaped opening. On the contrary, according to the cited reference, a pair of guide blocks (60a, 60b) are provided, which are disposed on either side of the feed screw nut (30). Although the ball screw (20) is disposed within openings (62) of the guide blocks, the feed screw nut (30) is not. Moreover, Nagai et al. requires a complex structure, compared to the claimed invention, requiring two guide blocks which sandwich the feed screw nut (30), whereas the slider is a separate movable member (34) altogether, attached to upper surfaces the guide blocks (60a, 60b) for surrounding the feed screw nut (30).

By contrast, the claimed invention has a simple structure, in which the feed screw nut 16 is directly accommodated inside the U-shaped opening of the slider 18 per se. By contrast, Nagai et al. requires separate guide blocks, and does not disclose or suggest providing a U-shaped opening directly in a slider, as in the claimed invention. Further, Nagai et al., as noted above, clearly does not suggest disposing the feed screw nut within any kind of U-shaped opening, much less a U-shaped opening provided directly in a slider, as now claimed.

It is therefore submitted that the cited references, separately or even in combination, could not disclose or suggest the features recited in the amended claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

This response has been timely submitted within the three month shortened statutory period and therefore no fees are due. Notwithstanding, should it be deemed that fees, or deficiencies in fees, are required in connection with this or any accompanying communication, such amounts may be charged to the Attorney's Deposit Account No. 07-2519.

Respectfully submitted,



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